

The competition for the title of “Benefactor of the Year” was created during the initial democratic transition in order to promote the pro-social activities of companies. It is the largest and longest running competition of its kind in Poland. Invariably, we have been rewarding socially responsible companies continuously for 20 years. “Benefactor of the Year” has inspired many local and regional competitions run by both NGOs and local public administrations. It shows and collects good practices of both large corporations (most experienced in CSR and CCI activities), but also equally presents the charitable activities of small and medium-sized enterprises. The competition does not divide companies for the better and weaker, it only shows that the good is one thing - regardless of the size of the company and the expenses incurred for charity.

The Benefactor of the Year brand is a real sign for the current or future employee that this company requires more of itself, that it will be able to meet the expectations of the modern, demanding employee, going beyond financial gratification for the work done.

The competition shows - through specific categories - how broad the social responsibility can be: employee volunteering, strategy, local engagement, social actions, educational, information, social and many other campaigns.

The winners of the Competition represent the best standards in the field of corporate social engagement every year. Award-winning companies are characterized by a comprehensive commitment to social projects, not limited to the transfer of funds.

The aim of the competition is not only to promote and reward the social commitment of the highest sample, but also to conduct the Competition in a manner consistent with the standards that the organizers require from others. The selection of successful candidates shall be carried out in a transparent and impartial manner, through clear assessment criteria and the prevention of conflicts of interest in assessors. To this end, it has created a several-stage process of selecting the best companies, in which independent experts, members of the Competition Chapter and Internet users are involved.

This year's 14th edition of the Competition for the title of Benefactor of the Year takes place under the motto “Heroes of social engagement”. Social engagement is no longer an empty slogan. The Covid 19 epidemic has shown how much people who engage socially are needed, how much it is necessary to value attitudes such as courage to act, social solidarity, selflessness, spontaneous but conscious response to emerging and changing needs and sudden challenges.

Equally important are the chains of cooperation between organisations, volunteers, social

partners. Such chains, based on trust, are formed for years. Thanks to them, social capital is built, extremely necessary especially in times of great challenges, such as the time of the pandemic. In 2020, social capital has shown its power.

An example is the winners of special awards “Socially engaged in the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic” awarded this year by the Chapter of the Benefactor of the Year Competition exceptionally already for the actions of 2020. These distinctions herald a change in social engagement. These are not just individual companies, but entire coalitions building extensive chains of cooperation, responding rapidly to emerging challenges. It is worth recalling some of them:

- We are together. We help!, which involved more than 70 companies and institutions in fundraising and donated over PLN 50 million to hospitals and medical institutions across Poland for equipment (respirators and beds), personal protective equipment and various in-kind support.
- We call for meals. More than 130 smaller and larger food and restaurant companies were involved in the action, which jointly delivered more than 230,000 meals, 153,000 drinks and 100,000 other food products for healthcare professionals.
- Business to hospitals. The action involved 117 companies, which jointly delivered equipment such as respirators, cardiomonitors, autoclaves, personal protective equipment and disinfection services to medical institutions, with a total value of about PLN 5 million over four weeks.

It is also a preview of what this year’s edition of the Competition can show. The organisers of the competition are convinced that it will allow the selection of who distinguished themselves not only in the fact that they made social commitment part of their CSR strategies, allocated considerable resources, a lot of time and energy for the implementation of projects, but also demonstrated the characteristics described above of the heroes of social engagement, i.e. courage to act, reflexive relief, faith in the deep meaning of helping, trust in people, willingness to cooperate and build coalitions, both among the largest corporations and at the local level.

Source: <https://www.dobroczyncaroku.pl/o-konkursie>

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